WASHINGTON– U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell and the House of Representatives passed legislation to overhaul the Troubled Assets Relief Program and strengthen accountability measures today. The legislation will work to better protect taxpayer dollars used to stabilize the nation's financial markets and open up the credit markets to benefit families and businesses.

H.R. 384, the TARP Reform and Accountability Act, passed with a strong bipartisan 260 to 166 vote.

Mitchell said the reforms are necessary because the Bush Administration failed to track and explain how billions of taxpayer dollars borrowed by banks through TARP were spent.

"Now more than ever we need to make sure we protect every taxpayer dollar," said Mitchell. "Those who borrow money from the federal government must be required to tell the American people exactly how their money is being used."

Specifically, H.R. 384 would

- force banks to report how government funds are spent;
- limit bonuses for executives of firms participating in TARP;
- require the Treasury Department to take significant steps on foreclosure mitigation and call for spending up to $100 billion of TARP funds to protect homeowners;
- make permanent the increase in FDIC deposit insurance limits to $250,000 per account;
- direct the Treasury Department to make TARP funds available to smaller institutions such

as community banks on the same terms as large institutions already receiving funds; and

- expand the board created by the TARP law to oversee the Treasury Department's administration of the program, and allows the board to overturn Treasury policies regarding the program by a two-thirds vote.